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On the morning of the Saturday after Thanksgiving, there will be held at Philadelphia in connection with the meeting of the Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools a Round Table on the Teaching of Latin. The subject will be the question: "To what causes, whether administrative, or pedagogical, or both, is due the persistent lack of success in the teaching of the Classics?". The principal paper will be by Principal Denbigh of the Morris High School of New York, and a number of teachers in both Colleges and Schools have signified their willingness to take part in the discussion. Several have however taken exception to the assumption in the title that there is a lack of success in the teaching of the Classics. It seems worth while to go into the matter a little and to see just what the situation is.

Both Latin and Greek are unquestionably much better taught now than they have ever been before. This point was fully brought out by Professor Rolfe in his Presidential address at the last meeting of the American Philological Association at Pittsburgh last December. He said:

This improvement is beyond question, although it has been rendered somewhat less obvious by a growing lack of intellectual interest on the part of pupils and their parents. This is due in the case of the former to the distraction of effort and weakening of the mental fibre caused by the addition of so many new subjects to the curriculum. . . . In the case of the latter it may be ascribed to a growing materialism and indifference to the finer things of life, and to the inability to control their offspring and to guide them aright. . . . There is, however, no occasion for pessimism about the results of our teaching of the classics, so far as they are affected by conditions which it is in the power of the classical teachers to control.

It seems to me that Professor Rolfe here confuses two aspects of the question, the quality of the teaching and the results of the teaching. His qualification, "so far as they are affected by conditions which it is in the power of the classical teachers to control", contains the real question. We classical teachers have been turning our attention almost entirely to the betterment of our methods and the thoroughness of our preparation. But is it now not increasingly necessary to pay attention to the conditions of our teaching? Are we to rest content with

these conditions, which Professor Rolfe implies, with a depth of pessimism far beyond my own much criticised complaints, to be not in our power to control? It is just this question which will be the main point of the discussion at Philadelphia. These conditions are almost entirely administrative, for owing to the vast increase in the numbers of pupils crowding into the High Schools, particularly in our larger cities, the accommodations have proven entirely inadequate, and in many cases the cost of meeting the increasing demands has been almost prohibitive. As a consequence it is quite within the bounds of probability to assert that at least three fourths of our High School pupils are not making the progress which the efforts of the teachers should produce, owing to the bad administrative conditions. When forty or fifty pupils are crowded into a room intended for thirty, without maps or illustrative material of any kind, where does the success come in? It is customary nowadays to maintain that there should be a Latin atmosphere in the classroom. Usually it is anything but Latin. In some towns where the school-houses are adequate, the salaries paid the teachers are so poor that good teachers can not be procured. Where does the success come in there? This is also an administrative question. In fact almost all of the obstacles in the way of actual success in teaching the Classics are administrative, and I have some hopes that the open-minded administrators are beginning to realize this and to turn their serious attention to the betterment of these conditions. If this were not the case I should be pessimistic indeed.

I am sure that it is within our power to control these conditions. Of course, in the last analysis, the final control lies in the hands of Boards and Superintendents of Education. But as yet there has not come from the teachers themselves any insistent demand. I have yet to see any organized effort on the part of classical teachers to present their needs to the proper authorities. The scientific people have no hesitation in presenting their needs. But the truth of the matter is that we classicists have been rather inclined to glory in the fact that we could accomplish so much with so little. We have not asked with any insistence for even a moiety of the appropriations for books and illustrations that

the scientific brethren have *demanded* for science. With all that they have obtained they have succeeded very poorly. With practically individual teaching, with expensive apparatus and fine laboratories they have not been able to do what we have done with almost nothing to help us; and that too, when they have had behind them the glamour of novelty, the lure of the practical, the call of our materialistic age. Give us some of their advantages and Professor Rolfe will not have to make his qualification. So let us come to this Philadelphia meeting and show that the chief cause for the persistent lack of success in teaching the Classics is not the teacher but the administration, and, with the administration behind us, we will guarantee to educate once more the American youth.

G. L.

CONCERNING METHODS OF LANGUAGE TEACHING¹

A certain popular lecturer, in advancing the superior claims of the sciences, manual training, and domestic science over the languages and the humanities, was wont to tell a story of a young girl just graduated from a city High School. In the cab on the way home she pointed out to her admiring family a dog, calling it first by its French name, afterward by the German, thus using two foreign languages of a creature which was, "after all, only a little yellow cur".

By the audience in general this story was hailed with prolonged applause; but there were always a few thoughtful persons who asked themselves and one another whether the gentleman really understood the purpose of language study. Some methods of teaching languages often give rise to the question whether there are not also teachers of both ancient and modern tongues who are equally in the dark.

We are frequently told that Americans are the poorest linguists in the world; the glibness with which certain European nations speak half-a-dozen languages is contrasted, to our disadvantage, with the halting German, the ill-pronounced French, and the non-existent Italian and Spanish of the average traveling American; there is much head-shaking over the lack of practical value in our scant knowledge of

European tongues. In the same breath, usually, comes the taunt that Americans are too much wrapped up in material things, too busily engaged in the chase after the dollar to think seriously of the educational amenities.

This accusation regarding the dollar-chase has a distinctly humorous side for the American who does not sit down meekly under the strictures of European and 'near-culture' American critics. Any one not thus hypnotized must realize that most Europeans are chasing money of much smaller denominations, for the sake of the coins; while, as a rule, the American is chasing for the sake of the chase. It is the pursuit of the small coins that gives the average European shop-keeper, porter, landlord, or waiter his much-vaunted glibness in the use of other tongues than his own. Moreover, European countries are so small that natives of one country may pick up, with very little trouble, a commercial knowledge of the speech of their neighbors. The linguistic knowledge of the mass of Europeans includes no grammatical knowledge, no acquaintance with literature, no ability to go outside the sentences and the phrases which the speakers have picked up in parrot-fashion. On the other hand, the American who has learned French or German in our Schools, while he may, at first, have a little difficulty in understanding what seems to him the rapidly spoken language of the native European, will, in a very short time, get his bearings, and be able to take his part in a conversation, or follow a lecture at the Sorbonne or in a German University. Moreover, he knows something of the literature of the foreign language that he has studied, and is able to listen intelligently to a German opera or drama or to the masterpieces presented at the Comédie Française. One hears much of the grotesque pronunciation of French by the traveling American; but among educated Frenchmen, including University professors, I have met only one man who pronounced English even fairly well, while few Germans, even after a residence of many years in this country, ever master the sounds of *th* and *w*, or the distinction between infinitive and participial constructions.

Some years ago, an old schoolmate of my own, in our school magazine, went into raptures over the linguistic abilities of the immigrants landing on Ellis Island, and expressed the wonder whether students trained in American Schools and Colleges could be of any use in such matters. Shortly after the gentleman had expressed his want of confidence in American institutions of learning, I had occasion to write him, inquiring whether there were any openings for persons capable of acting as interpreters, as one of my own students, handicapped by defective eyesight, was looking for such a position. The young woman in question was a born linguist, speaking and writing German with fluency and correctness; she was only a trifle less competent in

¹In THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 6.33 it was announced that matter dealing with the use of the Direct Method in the teaching of Modern Languages would be presented in early issues. Since those who are urging that the salvation of Latin in this country depends on the teaching of Latin by the Direct Method are constantly insisting that the Direct Method should be employed in the teaching of Latin because the teachers of the Modern Languages have learned by experience that they must employ the Direct Method if their teaching is to be in any way successful, it becomes worth while to consider whether the teachers of Modern Languages are really in any sense unanimous in support of the Direct Method as applied to their own work. This question is quite apart from another very important question, whether it is fair to argue from experience in the teaching of the Modern Languages concerning the right method of teaching the Classics. Professor Sheldon, whose paper appears in this issue, proved herself a warm friend of the Classics in her paper, Latin and Greek for Students of French, printed in THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 4.218-220.